

CLAIMS

1. Method of decorating an article comprising a step consisting of preparing a transfer sheet by printing same
5 with at least one heat-activated ink, and a transfer step consisting of applying said sheet to the article to be decorated and heating the assembly, characterised in that the heating is performed by quenching the article to be decorated, which is associated with the transfer sheet, in a
10 non-ferrous metal alloy bath, which is maintained at a nominal temperature for the activation of said heat-activated substance.
2. Method of decorating an article according to claim 1, characterised in that the bath is made up of an alloy
15 containing antimony, tin, bismuth and lead.
3. Method of decorating an article according to claim 1, characterised in that the bath is made up of an alloy containing bismuth, lead, tin and cadmium.
4. Method of decorating an article according to claim 1,
20 characterised in that the bath is made up of a non-ferrous metal alloy containing bismuth.
5. Method of decorating an article according to any one of the preceding claims, characterised in that the article to be decorated is enclosed in a film of Teflon on which an
25 image is printed using at least one heat-activated substance.
6. Method of decorating an article according to any one of the claims from 1 to 4, characterised in that the article to be decorated is enclosed in a sheet of backing paper on

which an image is printed using at least one heat-activated substance.

5 7. Method of decorating an article according to any one of the claims from 1 to 4, characterised in that the article to be decorated is enclosed in a sheet of transfer paper on which an image is printed using at least one heat-activated substance.

10 8. Method of decorating an article according to any one of the claims from 1 to 4, characterised in that the article to be decorated is enclosed in a flocked material on which an image is printed using at least one heat-activated substance.

15 9. Method of decorating an article according to any of the preceding claims, characterised in that said heat-activated substance is a sublimable ink.

10 10. Method of decorating an article according to any of the preceding claims, characterised in that the heat-activated substance is an ink of the "thermofusible" type.

20 11. Method of decorating an article according to any of the preceding claims, characterised in that the heat-activated substance is a gold leaf.

25 12. Method of decorating an article according to at least one of the claims from 1 to 9, characterised in that it comprises a transfer step in which the transfer sheet forms a watertight envelope around the article to be decorated, which is connected to a depression spring.

30 13. Method of decorating an article according to claim 1, characterised in that the heating to activate the ink during the transfer step is assured by immersion in an alloy consisting of bismuth, lead, tin and cadmium (Bi 50%, Pb

25%, Sn 12.5%, Cd 12.5%), which has a melting point of around 70°C, maintained at a temperature of around 190°C.

14. Method of decorating an article according to claim 1, characterised in that the substrate consists of backing 5 paper.

15. Method of decorating an article according to claim 1, characterised in that the heat-activated substance consists, for example, of a heat-activated glue that comprises pigments or metal powders.

10 16. Method of decorating an article according to claim 1, characterised in that it comprises a step consisting of unwinding a transfer sheet in the form of a strip, and of bringing it into contact with a wire to be decorated upstream from the bath.

15 17. Equipment for implementing the method according to claim 1, characterised in that it comprises a vat equipped with a thermostat containing a bath of a non-ferrous metal alloy.